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# RM1.74m quit rent will take a toll on varsity

**PASIR GUDANG:** Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) will have to dip into its research and development budget to meet the Pas-led Kedah government's demand for the full payment of the RM1.74 million in quit rent.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said the university's R&D programme would be affected if the state government refused to give it any rebate.

UUM paid only RM100,000 a year in 2007 and 2008, with rebates.

Khaled said the state government had yet to respond to the six requests by UUM to have the rebate reinstated.

The last discussion on the matter was when UUM Vice-Chancellor Datuk Prof Dr Mohamed Mustafa met with the state government on July 25 last year.

On April 19, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak said UUM was given rebates for two years and that the RM1.74 million was the normal rate.

UUM had applied for a quit rent reduction in 2006 because of financial constraints and the request was approved by the then Barisan Nasional-led state

government.

After it expired, UUM applied for another rebate in June 2009, a year after Pas took over the state government in the general election.

The request was rejected at a state executive councillors' meeting on Nov 5, 2009.

"If the Pas-led state government continues to maintain a tough stand, it will indirectly affect UUM students.

"The university will pay up but then it will have to use the funds allocated for R&D or community service programmes," said Khaled after opening a new Marrybrown fast food outlet in Masai here yesterday.

Present were Johor Jaya assemblyman Tan Cher Puk and Permas Jaya assemblyman M. Samy.

On a related matter, Khaled urged the Kedah government to look into water woes affecting UUM and other districts in the state.

Kedah Umno liaison chief Datuk Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah had said on Friday that there were perennial water woes in UUM and its surrounding district as well as in Sik, Pendang and Baling.